

Vacations & Your Pet

If you're a pet owner planning a business trip or vacation, the decision to take your pet along or leave him behind is an important one for both you and your companion. While it may be tempting to take your furry friend with you, keep in mind that some animals are not suited for travel because of temperament, illness, or physical impairment. If you have any doubts about whether it is appropriate for your pet to travel, talk to your veterinarian.

If you determine it is best for your pet to accompany you, you will need to devote extra time to prepare for the journey. For example, you'll need to have all of the supplies necessary to keep your pet comfortable while he's away from home, and you'll need to familiarize yourself with any pet-related restrictions or requirements imposed by airlines, destination countries or states, hotels, etc. Reading our guidelines for traveling with a pet will help make the journey a safe and enjoyable one for both you and your companion.

Travel Alternatives

If you decide that your pet should not travel, consider the alternatives: Have a responsible friend or relative look after your pet, board your animal at a kennel, or hire a pet sitter.

If a friend or relative is going to take care of your pet, ask if that person can take your animal into his or her home. Animals can get lonely when left alone. Be sure that your pet is comfortable with the temporary caretaker and his or her home, not to mention any pets that person has.

If you choose to board your pet, get references and inspect the kennel. Your veterinarian or local shelter can help you select a facility. If you are hiring a pet sitter, interview the candidates and check their references. (A pet sitter may be preferable if your pet is timid or elderly and needs the comfort of familiar surroundings during your absence.)

Whatever option you choose, your pet should be up-to-date on all vaccinations and in sound health. If you arrange for someone to care for your pet while you are away, provide the caretaker with the telephone number where you can be reached, the name and telephone number of your veterinarian, and your pet's medical or dietary needs. You should also make sure that your pet is comfortable with the person you have chosen.